

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SB 5707

As Reported by House Committee On:
State Government Operations & Accountability

Title: An act relating to creating a women's history consortium.

Brief Description: Creating a women's history consortium.

Sponsors: Senators Fraser, Eide, McAuliffe, Kohl-Welles, Keiser, Franklin, Kline, Haugen, Spanel and Rasmussen.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

State Government Operations & Accountability: 3/22/05, 3/25/05 [DPA].

Brief Summary of Bill
(As Amended by House Committee)

- Creates the Women's History Consortium under the management of the Washington State Historical Society.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS & ACCOUNTABILITY

Majority Report: Do pass as amended. Signed by 8 members: Representatives Haigh, Chair; Green, Vice Chair; Nixon, Ranking Minority Member; Clements, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Hunt, McDermott, Miloscia and Schindler.

Staff: Hannah Lidman (786-7291 and Marsha Reilly (786-7135).

Background:

In 2004, the Legislature directed the Institute for Public Policy (Institute) to make recommendations to the 2005 Legislature for the development of a state women's history organization. To solicit a range of views, the Institute was directed to convene an advisory group of experts, survey the public, and research the work of similar organizations across the country.

The Washington State Historical Society

The Washington State Historical Society (Society) is one of two historical societies that act as trustees for the state to maintain and preserve articles and properties that illustrate the history of the state. The Society is required to establish a comprehensive and consistent statewide policy for historical matters, statewide coordination of historical programs, and a coordinated

budget for all state historical agencies. The Society also has authority over the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial Advisory Committee, which coordinates and provides guidance to the state's observance of the bicentennial of the Lewis and Clark Expedition.

Women's Suffrage

Women in Washington were guaranteed the right to vote when the Fifth Amendment to the State Constitution was adopted in 1910.

Summary of Amended Bill:

The Women's History Consortium (Consortium) is created with the Society as the managing agency. On behalf of the Consortium, the Society must:

- direct and supervise administrative and clerical functions;
- include budgetary requests within the Society's departmental budget;
- collect and deposit all nonappropriated revenues;
- provide staff support;
- print and disseminate notices, rules and orders adopted; and
- provide or allocate office space.

The Consortium is managed by a board of advisors consisting of 15 members: 11 members are appointed by the Governor; two senators, one from each caucus, are appointed by the President of the Senate; and two representatives, one from each caucus, are appointed by the Speaker of the House. The board of advisors must be appointed by September 30, 2005. The responsibilities of the board include:

- management, planning and oversight of organizational and fiscal activities;
- adoption of Consortium membership criteria and procedures;
- identification of long- and short-term priorities;
- appointment of special committees and task forces; and
- development of recommendations for the commemoration of the women's suffrage centennial.

Within available resources, the Consortium is responsible for:

- compiling and making available a comprehensive index of materials;
- identifying publicly unrepresented or inaccessible topics, historical periods, or materials and developing strategies for public availability, including topics related to the accomplishments of mothers;
- encouraging collection and preservation of historically relevant materials;
- referring potential material donors and developing procedures for protection of material donations, loans, leases and purchases;
- encouraging exhibit development, curriculum material development, and public access to women's history information and materials;
- seeking private funding and developing the concept for a grant program; and
- developing a volunteer program.

The board of advisors must provide the appropriate committees of the Legislature with a report by December 1, 2006, on the progress of required activities undertaken by the Consortium and the board of advisors. The report must also include the Consortium needs and plans for the future.

The Consortium must provide the Legislature and the Governor with a report by September 1, 2006, on recommendations for commemoration of the 2010 centennial of adoption of the women's suffrage amendment to the State Constitution.

Amended Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The topics of motherhood and the accomplishments of mothers in the state are identified as unrepresented topics that the Consortium must develop strategies to promote.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available for HB 1839.

Effective Date of Amended Bill: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: The Washington State Historical Society is a good choice as a managing agency because they have the experience and capacity for this type of work. Information about women's history in this state is scattered and hard to find. The Consortium will help individuals and researchers be able to locate the information and documents they are looking for. Most of the work of the Consortium will be online and will not require a lot of physical space. The work of the Consortium on the state's centennial of women's suffrage will likely make Washington a gateway state for the national centennial a decade later.

Testimony Against: None.

Persons Testifying: (In support of original bill) Senator Fraser, prime sponsor; Dave Nicandri, Washington State Historical Society; Anne Kilgannon, Office of the Secretary of State; and Sue Lean, League of Women's Voters.

(Neutral) Annie Pennucci, Washington State Institute for Public Policy.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.